

# INTRODUCTION

On May 16, 2011, the North Carolina State Library Commission charged the Public Library Development Committee with the following task:

*To meet the library and information needs of the people of North Carolina, by updating the 1998 Public Library Guidelines to reflect 21st century public librarianship as most effectively practiced, working in conjunction with the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association and the Public Library Section, North Carolina Library Association.*

Crafting public library standards raises complex issues. To ensure that many viewpoints would be considered, the Public Library Development Committee membership included library professionals from small, medium and large public libraries, as well as representatives from the library/information studies educational community and the State Library. These dedicated members of the Committee contributed a significant amount of time to developing the 2012 North Carolina Public Library Standards:

**Dan Barron\***, Director, Avery–Mitchell–Yancey Regional Library  
**Ruth Ann Copley**, Director, Davidson County Public Library  
**Clara M. Chu**, Professor and Dept. Chair, Dept. of Library and Information Studies, UNC Greensboro  
**Dana Eure**, Director, Cabarrus County Public Library  
**Karen Foss\*\***, Director, Catawba County Public Library  
**Laura O’Donoghue**, Library Development Consultant, State Library  
**Jennifer Pratt**, Chief of Library Development, State Library  
**Jody Risacher**, Director, Cumberland County Public Library & Information Center  
**Ed Sheary**, Director, Buncombe County Public Libraries  
**Mary Sizemore\***, Director, High Point Public Library (Committee Chair),  
**Harriet Smith\***, Chair, State Library Commission  
**William Snyder**, Director, Henderson County Public Library  
**Harry Tuchmayer\***, Director, New Hanover County Public Library  
**Mike Wasilick**, Director, Wake County Public Libraries  
**M.J. Wilkerson \*\*\***, Director, Alamance County Public Libraries  
**Anna Yount**, Director, Transylvania County Library

In March 2012, the Committee completed a working draft that was presented to the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association for consideration. After feedback from the directors was incorporated, a final draft was reviewed and approved by the State Library Commission on May 18, 2012.

\*Member, State Library Commission

\*\*President, North Carolina Public Library Directors Association (2011)

\*\*\*Chair, Public Library Section, North Carolina Library Association (2010–2011)

The 2012 North Carolina Public Library Standards represent “best practices” for library directors to implement while taking into account community needs and expectations. They are meant to inform and guide library funders, supporters, and staff; serve as a point of reference for evaluation; support a change in policy or services; and provide a framework for ongoing development.

The Standards are written as benchmarks of conditions necessary for effective library service in North Carolina. Each benchmark is supported by one or more activities that contribute to the development of those conditions. While a few activities do specify requirements established by North Carolina General Statute or Administrative Code, they do not generally include statistical measures that set a minimum requirement or represent an average public library. Public library service in North Carolina is delivered through 80 regional, county and municipal library systems operating 412 service points in unique urban and rural communities across the state. The benchmarks acknowledge this diversity by encouraging each library to determine the most appropriate metrics for their success.

The benchmarks are divided into five sections:

- ADMINISTRATION
- FACILITIES
- HUMAN RESOURCES
- RESOURCES
- SERVICES

Within each section, the benchmarks are organized by three categories:

■ **Public Value** – includes practices that demonstrate effective stewardship of public funds and establish the Library’s relevance and impact in the community.

■ **Management** – includes practices that result in effective and sustainable library operations.

■ **Community Engagement** – includes practices that build collaborative relationships and involve community members in planning, developing, using and evaluating library services.

Each benchmark has a desired outcome for a library’s community or community members. These are broad statements intended to provide libraries with a foundation for establishing more specific, measureable outcomes appropriate to the needs of their communities.

While this Standards document identifies the essential services and best practices for North Carolina public libraries, it does not include detailed criteria and recommended tools to support each benchmark. Additional information is provided along with PDF files of the Standards on the State Library of North Carolina’s website under Library Development:

<http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ld/index.html>.

